

*Privilege—Mr. Lawrence*

If they have nothing to hide, Mr. Speaker, why not agree to that motion? There is nothing more trying for a conscience which has anything to fear than the thought that what it has to fear might be revealed. I came here this afternoon without any preconceived ideas. Now I am convinced that this government is covering something up. That is not unusual for this government.

● (1632)

There are two matters at stake here. The McDonald commission is dealing in general with certain activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I say at once that I take second place to no member of this House in terms of the number of cases in which I have been involved over the years and in which the Mounted Police took part. In all those cases I have known of only two in which any one of the Mounted Police endeavoured to deceive the courts.

I am very deeply concerned about what has taken place in connection with the representations which are being made and the innuendoes which have been spread in the evidence before the McDonald commission. The RCMP is the most honest, straightforward police institution in all the world. That is its reputation, even though there may have been one or two cases in which there has been obvious wrongdoing, and that should be rooted out.

The royal commission will make its findings. Those findings will have to do with general activities and proclivities which were allegedly wrongful.

The second matter at stake is that the House of Commons is its own judge and must remain the judge of the conduct of its members. No commission has the right to interfere with the right of this House to determine what took place.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** If there is no truth in the allegations which have been made, why not set up a committee of the House on the basis of unanimity? As has happened in past cases, the majority of Liberal members are again united behind the Deputy Prime Minister. With a majority of members of the Liberal party on the committee, do hon. members think there would be any danger that a report detrimental to the Government of Canada would be given? If that took place, it would be the first time, and I have been here almost 39 years. I have never noticed an example in which Liberal members did other than sing the Hallelujah chorus whenever any matter came up, no matter how detrimental it was. Why not set up this committee? What are hon. members opposite so worried about? What are they so concerned about?

I think the McDonald commission sits behind closed doors. I am going to see Mr. Justice McDonald. He has asked to see me tomorrow. The McDonald commission sits behind closed doors. Is the government afraid of what will be revealed? I think the government has every reason to be, but it pretends to be very anxious to have this matter cleared up. When will the McDonald commission report? There is no indication that it

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

will report before at least six or eight months from now, according to what I read in the press.

**Mr. Nielsen:** After the election.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** The hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), who never at any time is politically minded, says that the commission will report after the election. I do not know why the government is worrying about the result because, no matter what it does, it is going to be defeated.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Let us have the situation cleared up. Let us absolve alleged wrongdoers, if they deserve to be absolved, but why—I repeat, why—is there such a desire on the part of the Deputy Prime Minister—and a similar message has been indicated by other Liberal members who have spoken—to deny the people of Canada the right to know what took place?

It has been part and parcel of the policy of the Trudeau government from the beginning, to hide facts and conceal facts from parliament. I will give a simple example. When the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) wanted a swimming pool, philanthropists provided \$200,000. Would hon. members not think they deserve to be anointed by public opinion? Are they to receive their rewards only through the Order of Canada? When we asked for information, the Prime Minister said, “I won’t give you that information.” That has been the answer all along with regard to anything which would be embarrassing to the government.

I will now speak of the Deputy Prime Minister. He has been in the House a long while. I have that admiration for him which one develops for those who have unusual parliamentary ability. He has that. That is generally admitted. He blushes about it because he knows that that is the general feeling. With that massive reputation for parliamentary perfection, does the Deputy Prime Minister not think it would be nice to be able to say, “When parliament asked for action, realizing that something should be revealed, I did not take the advice of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang), nor did I adopt his attitude to parliament”? Would it not be nice to be able to say, “I decided that we would reveal the facts”?

If there is nothing to hide, why hide it? If there is nothing to conceal, why conceal it? Why not reveal the facts? Some hon. members who have spoken have said that the people of Canada have already convicted this government on this matter. Of that, those hon. members have better knowledge than I have, because apparently they have been in touch with their constituents and know what is going to happen to them.

Speaking about headlines, I suppose I have been the subject of as many press misquotations as anybody in this House. Sometimes I think I have a record in that connection, but having read *Hansard* and having watched television, I can say that I saw nothing wrong with the headlines.

Headlines do not go into full detail. One headline read, “Liberal Government Letter Misleads M.P., Speaker Rules”. I have the letter here, and it is false. One hon. member asked,